

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Development of formalization Toolkit and sector specific model employment contract for the shrimp, plastic, light-engineering and leather sectors to support improved documentation of employment relationship

August 2026

1. Introduction:

This 'Terms of Reference' details the working modalities of the assignment titled "Development of formalization Toolkit and sector specific model employment contract for the shrimp, plastic, light-engineering and leather sectors to support improved documentation of employment relationship". Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies- BILS is the commissioning authority of assignment. The assignment constitutes an essential part of a partnering project between BILS and ILO titled "Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh (ADWiB)".

2. Background and rationale:

Bangladesh has advanced significant economic growth over the past decades, driven by the expansion of the labour-intensive industries and the increasing contribution of micro, small and medium enterprises across a range of sectors. The shrimp, plastic, light engineering and leather sectors play an important role in employment generation, export earnings, industrial diversification and local economic development. Despite their economic importance, employment relationship in these sectors remains largely informal, with many workers engaged without written contracts, documented terms and conditions of employment or adequate employment records.

Informal employment arrangements often results in uncertainty regarding wages, working hours, leave entitlements, occupational safety and health, social protection coverage, and dispute resolution mechanism. The absence of basic employment documentation can undermine workers' rights, increase vulnerability to exploitation and create challenges for employers in demonstrating compliance with national labour legislations and international labour standards. Informality also limits enterprises' ability to improve productivity. access finance, participate in responsible supply chains and meet the growing expectation of buyers and regulators in labour practices and due diligences.

While Bangladesh Labour Law provide a framework for regulating employment relationship, many enterprises, particularly on MSMEs, face practical challenges in understanding and implementing the documentation requirements. limited administrative capacity and

standardized tools, low awareness on legal obligations and sector specific employment practices often contribute to gaps in formal employment arrangements. These challenges are more evident in sectors characterized by sessional work, temporary employment, daily-wage arrangements, piece-rate work and other non-standard forms of employment.

The transition from informal to formal employment requires practical, user-friendly and sector specific tools that can easily adopted by the enterprises and workers. Standardized templates, checklist, recordkeeping system and morel employment contract can help simplify compliance, improve transparency in employment relationship, strengthen workers' access to labour rights and protection and support enterprises in meeting legal requirements.

Against this backdrop, BILS has taken initiative to develop employment formalization Toolkit and sector specific model employment contract for the shrimp, plastic, light-engineering and leather sectors. The initiative will provide enterprises and workers with practical guidance on establishing documented employment relationship, maintaining essential employment records and implementing the national legal standard for employment relationship.

The initiative will contribute to promoting decent work, improving compliance with labour legislation, enhancing transparency and accountability in employment practices and supporting broader efforts towards employment formalization in Bangladesh.

3. Objective of the assignment:

The overall objective of the assignment is to develop formalization Toolkit and sector specific model employment contract for the shrimp, plastic, light-engineering and leather sectors.

4. Scope of work:

The consultant will develop practical formalization tools, templates, and sector-specific model employment contracts to support improved documentation of employment relationships and working conditions in selected sectors. The assignment will cover the shrimp, plastics, light engineering, and leather sectors and will be completed within **25 working days**. The consultant will undertake the following tasks:

4.1 The consultant will conduct a focused desk review of:

- Existing employment contracts, appointment letters, worker records, checklists, and workplace documentation used in Bangladesh;
- Applicable national labour laws, rules, policies, and administrative requirements;



- Relevant ILO guidance, principles, and tools on employment formalization and decent work;
- Existing tools and templates developed by government institutions, employers' and workers' organizations, sector associations, and development partners;
- Common employment arrangements and documentation gaps in the shrimp, plastics, light engineering, and leather sectors.

The review will identify the minimum documentation required for workers and employers, common gaps in current practices, and areas requiring sector-specific adaptation.

4.2 Stakeholder Consultations and Needs Assessment

The consultant will conduct targeted consultations with selected representatives of:

- Relevant government institutions;
- Employers' and workers' organizations;
- Sector and business associations;
- Enterprises and workers from the four selected sectors;
- Labour-law, human-resource, occupational safety and health, and social-protection practitioners;
- Other stakeholders identified in consultation with the ILO.

The consultations will assess existing employment practices, documentation needs, challenges faced by workers and enterprises, and the usability of proposed tools.

4.3 Development of a Formalization Toolkit

The consultant will develop **one practical and user-friendly formalization toolkit** for workers and enterprises. The toolkit should use simple language and be suitable for use by micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises with limited human-resource and administrative capacity.

The toolkit will include, but will not necessarily be limited to:

- Formalization readiness checklist for enterprises;
- Worker onboarding and documentation checklist;
- Model appointment letter;
- Worker registration and personal information form;
- Job description template;
- Attendance and working-hours record;
- Wage, overtime, deduction, and payment record;
- Pay slip template;
- Leave and holidays;



- Leave application and leave-record template;
- Resignation and termination notice templates;
- Final settlement checklist;
- Service certificate or employment certificate template;
- Step-by-step guidance for introducing formal employment documentation.

The toolkit should distinguish between essential minimum documentation and additional good-practice tools that enterprises may adopt progressively.

4.4 Development of Sector-Specific Model Employment Contracts

The consultant will develop **four model employment contracts**, one for each of the following sectors:

1. Shrimp;
2. Plastics;
3. Light engineering;
4. Leather.

The model contracts should address, as applicable:

- Any sector specific thing
- Seasonal, temporary, daily-wage, piece-rate, or production-based employment arrangements, where applicable;
- Sector-specific job roles, duties, and places of work;
- Working hours, shift arrangements, rest periods, and overtime practices;
- Wage calculation and payment arrangements, including piece-rate or production-based payments where relevant; etc

The contracts will be developed in both **Bangla and English** and submitted in editable formats.

4.5 Development of Orientation and Piloting Materials (to conduct Orientation and Piloting Session mentioned in 4.6)

The consultant will prepare materials for an orientation and piloting session on formalization concepts and the use of the developed tools.

The materials will include:

- Session agenda;
- Presentation slides;
- Facilitator's notes;
- Participant handouts;
- Practical exercises and case examples;



- Demonstration materials on completing the contracts and templates;
- Participant feedback form;
- Pre- and post-session assessment forms, where appropriate.

4.6. Conduct of Orientation and Piloting Session

The consultant will conduct **one orientation and piloting session** for selected workers, employers, sector associations, government representatives, and other relevant stakeholders.

The session will cover:

- Basic concepts and benefits of employment formalization;
- Minimum elements of a documented employment relationship;
- Employer and worker responsibilities;
- Practical use of the formalization toolkit;
- Completion and adaptation of the model employment contracts;
- Basic worker recordkeeping;
- Identification of challenges in applying the tools at enterprise level.

The consultant will use practical exercises and group discussions to test the usability, clarity, and relevance of the tools.

4.7 Revision and Finalization of Tools

Based on feedback received during stakeholder consultations, technical review, and the orientation and piloting session, the consultant will revise and finalize:

- The formalization toolkit;
- The four sector-specific model employment contracts;
- All checklists, forms, templates, and guidance materials;
- Orientation and piloting materials.

The consultant will ensure that all materials are practical, legally appropriate, gender-responsive, accessible, and suitable for use by workers and small enterprises.

4.8 Final Assignment Report

The consultant will prepare a concise final report covering:

- Activities undertaken;
- Stakeholders consulted;
- Key employment-documentation and formalization gaps identified;
- Summary of feedback from the piloting session;

- Changes made to the tools following piloting;
- Key lessons learned;
- Recommendations for wider application, replication, and scale-up.

5. Assignment Time Frame:

Total assignment period shall be for 25 working days with completion deadline by September 2026.

Indicative Allocation of Working Days

Task	Working Days
Desk review and preparation of methodology	3 days
Stakeholder consultations and needs assessment	4 days
Development of draft formalization toolkit	6 days
Development of four sector-specific model contracts	5 days
Preparation and conduct of orientation and piloting session	3 days
Revision and finalization of tools and contracts	3 days
Preparation of final assignment report	1 day
Total	25 working days

6. Required competencies of the consultant:

- At least a Master's degree from an accredited college or university in Sociology, Social Work, Social Welfare, Anthropology, Development Studies, Law or any other relevant subjects.
- At least 5 years of experience of working in research/study, and experience on labour issue, particularly documentation of employment relationship, will be added value for the competencies.
- In-depth understating and knowledge on workers' legal entitlement.

7. Proposal submission Procedure:

Interested consultants are requested to submit proposals to **Executive Director, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies - BILS, Razzak Villa, (1st and 4th floor) House -8/A/Ka, Road-13 (new), Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1209** or through email: bils@citech.net.



The consultant must submit the following documents along with the **Technical & Financial Proposal**:

- CV of the consultants/researchers who will undertake the assignment.
- A list of previous experiences relevant to this assignment.
- Budget (including applicable VAT & TAX)

8. Deadline for proposal submission:

On or before 17.30 hrs. 15 August 2026.